

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT
Year A March 23, 2014

Theme: No Water Jar Needed

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A poem for the Third Sunday of Lent: “No Water Jar Needed”

The text said:” “She left her water jar.”
Seemingly a throwaway line in the midst of the story,
Yet the whole message may be here.

That water jar had been the woman’s companion since she was a girl,
Every day, except Shabbat of course,
Her work, every woman’s work, was to fetch the water.

Gran and ma had taught her and her sisters
How to walk and balance that jar on their heads.
Empty was easy; full, heavy, brimming, for miles: oh my.

To the well and back, every day, no excuses.
The family needed the precious liquid to drink, cook, wash.
In this desert land an empty jar was inconceivable.

So how could she now leave the water jar behind?
She had come to the well to fill it up
And now to return to the village without it!

Was she distracted by yet another man?
She had a track record on that score – how did this man know?
Couldn’t she focus on the basic womanly duty of carrying water?

Yet it doesn’t say she forgot the water jar.
She left it; she deliberately, consciously left it.
She no longer needed that old jar; and she no longer wanted it.

The woman of Samaria found someone there at Jacob’s well
Who unleashed a living fountain inside her.
No more old, sour, stale cistern water for her, never again.

From now on fresh, pure, free-flowing, crystal-clean water;
Never again the long walk to a well to draw it out;
For his water was already deep within her own soul.

Now her bone-deep thirst for healing and forgiveness was quenched,
The five husbands were over and done; she was washed clean;
Her heart, her inner skin was awash in him, in his living water.

“I don’t need that old water jar,” she cried.
“No more lonely walks to the well; no more heavy loads to carry back.
I am no longer thirsty; and I will never be thirsty again.”

Head unbowed from the weight of that jar or of her own shame,
The woman ran to the village, living water bubbling inside her.
“Come,” she cried, “could it be, can it be, might it be, I’m sure it’s he!”

“Are you thirsty? Come with me; you don’t need a water jar.
Come to the one who quenches your thirsty heart and soul.
Drink this living water, drink from the spring of eternal life.”

“Are you tired of giving your all and coming up tired and spent?
Are you frustrated and demoralized at the emptiness around you?
Then let his fresh, pure water splash you inside and out with hope and joy.”

“Be drenched in his clear, clean water of mercy;
Bathe your failings, your sins, your fears, your weaknesses, your hesitation.
Come, hurry, come with me to the well: but no water jar needed.